

## REMARKS

Applicants have carefully considered the Office Action dated January 28, 2003 and the references cited therein. Applicants respectfully request reexamination and reconsideration of the application.

Claims 2, 4-7, and 21-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(b) as anticipated by United States Patent 4,197,945, Sherwood. In setting forth the rejection, the Examiner alleges that Sherwood discloses an aperture extending through a housing and isolated from an interior cavity. However, in Sherwood, the aperture C, as designated by the Examiner, is a slot or groove extending along the exterior of housing 17 and does not extend through the cavity B, as designated by the Examiner. In contrast, in the inventive apparatus 10, an aperture defined by a housing wall extends through the interior cavity 14, but is isolated from the interior cavity by the housing wall. Claim 12 has been amended accordingly and now recites an apparatus for protecting one or more pin connectors on a circuit board including a housing, a mechanism for removably securing the housing over the pin connector, and " *an aperture defined by a housing wall and extending through the interior cavity but isolated from the interior cavity by the housing wall* " (claim 12, lines 7-8). In Sherwood, the aperture C does not extend through the hinge wall 21 and into the cavity B. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that Sherwood does not disclose the subject matter of claim 12. In light of the above, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 12 and its respective dependent claims are not anticipated by or obvious in light of Sherwood.

Claim 14 has been amended to include limitations similar to amended claim 12. Specifically, claim 14 now recites an apparatus for protecting one or more electrical pin connectors on a circuit board including housing means, a mechanism for removably securing the housing means over the pin connector, a mechanism for aligning the interior cavity of the housing means with the pin connector and "*an aperture defined by a wall of the housing means and extending through the interior cavity and isolated from the interior cavity by the wall*" (claim 14, lines 9-10). Again, Applicants respectfully assert that Sherwood does not disclose the subject matter of claim 14 for at least the

same reasons as set forth with respect to claim 12. In light of the above, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 14 and its respective dependent claims are believed in condition for allowance.

In addition, regarding the rejection of claim 2, the Examiner has alleged that Sherwood discloses an interior cavity partitioned into a plurality of cavities. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections for the following reasons. The areas A and B designated by the Examiner as separate cavities form a contiguous space that is, in effect, a single cavity. The features 13 and 15 disclosed in Sherwood along the cavity wall do not create two separate cavities that are mechanically isolated from one another, as in the present invention, just a single cavity with features along the walls thereof. Conversely, in the present invention, the cavities 14A and 14B, as illustrated in Figs. 3 and 6, are separated by elements 24-25, which, when pin cover 10 is secured adjacent a circuit board, allows separate pin connectors in cavities 14A and 14B to be substantially mechanically isolated from each other.

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherwood. Claim 3 depends from claim 12 and is believed patentable for the same reasons as claim 12.

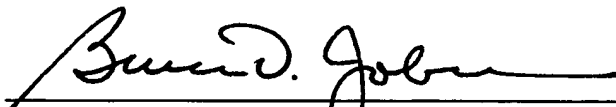
Claims 18-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherwood. Claim 18 has been amended to include limitations similar to amended claims 12 and 14. Specifically, claim 18 now recites a method for preventing damage or contamination of the pin connector including "*providing a protective cover having a housing with an interior cavity defined therein, an aperture defined by a wall of the housing and extending through the interior cavity and isolated from the interior cavity by the housing wall*" (claim 18, lines 4-6). Again, in Sherwood, the aperture C does not extend through the hinge wall 21 and into the cavity B. Applicants respectfully assert that Sherwood does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter of claim 18, for at least the same reasons as set forth with respect to claims 12 and 14. In light of the above, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 18 and its respective dependent claims are believed in condition for allowance.

New apparatus claim 23 is directed to an apparatus for protecting one or more pin connectors on a circuit board and recites "*a housing having a housing wall defining a plurality of interior cavities, each of the interior cavities sized to surround at least one*

*pin connector*" and *"a mechanism for aligning the plurality interior cavities with a plurality of pin connectors "* (claim 23, lines 3-8). In setting forth the rejections, the Examiner has admitted that Sherwood does not teach a plurality of pin connectors. Instead, the Examiner has alleged that Sherwood discloses making the apparatus any desired length. The Examiner further alleges that Foley teaches a plurality of pin connectors mounted on a board. Even if the Examiner's allegation are assumed to be true and the Sherwood and Foley references are properly combined as suggested by the Examiner, the combined teachings still do not teach or suggest the invention recited in claim 23. In particular, claim 23 specifically recites a housing having a housing wall defining a *plurality* of interior cavities, each of the interior cavities sized to surround at least one pin connector. That the combined teachings of Sherwood and Foley allegedly teach a single cavity B, as designated by the Examiner, that is capable of accommodating multiple pin connectors is distinctly different from Applicants claimed invention in which a *plurality* of interior cavities are utilized to accommodate multiple pin connectors. Neither Sherwood nor Foley disclose, teach or suggest a plurality of interior cavities, each sized to surround at least one pin connector, as recited in claim 23. In addition, claim 23 further recites a mechanism for aligning a *plurality* of interior cavities with the pin connectors. Again, neither Sherwood nor Foley disclose, teach or suggest a mechanism for aligning the *plurality* interior cavities with a plurality of pin connectors. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 23 is allowable over the teachings of Sherwood and Foley whether considered singularly or in combination.

Applicants believe the claims are in allowable condition. A notice of allowance for this application is solicited earnestly. If the Examiner has any further questions regarding this amendment, he/she is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the number listed below. The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any balances under 37 CFR §1.17, and 1.16 to Deposit Account No. 02-3038.

Respectfully submitted,



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2/27/03

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### Version Marked to Show Changes

Please substitute the following claims for pending claims with the same numbers.

3. The apparatus of claim [2] 12 wherein the plurality of cavities accommodate multiple pin connectors attached to the circuit board.

12. An apparatus for protecting one or more pin connectors on a circuit board comprising:

(a) a housing defining an interior cavity sized to surround at least one pin connector;

(b) a mechanism for removably securing the housing over the pin connector; and

(c) an aperture defined by a housing wall and extending through the [housing and] interior cavity but isolated from the interior cavity by the housing wall.

14. An apparatus for protecting one or more electrical pin connectors on a circuit board comprising:

(a) a housing means for defining an interior cavity and for receiving at least one pin connector;

(b) a mechanism for removably securing the housing means over the pin connector;

(c) a mechanism for aligning the interior cavity of the housing means with the pin connector; and

(d) an aperture defined by a wall of the housing means and extending through the [housing means] interior cavity and isolated from the interior cavity by the wall.

18. In a computer system having a circuit board and one or more electrical pin connectors affixed thereon, a method for preventing damage or contamination of the pin connector comprising:

(a) providing a protective cover having a housing with an interior cavity defined therein, an aperture defined by a wall of the housing and extending through the [housing] interior cavity and isolated from the interior cavity by the housing wall, and mechanisms for aligning the protective cover with features of the circuit board and for removably securing the protective cover over the pin connector;

(b) aligning the protective cover with features on one of the circuit board and pin connector; and

(c) removably securing the protective cover adjacent the circuit board so that the pin connector is disposed within the interior cavity of the protective cover.

Please add the following claim.

23. An apparatus for protecting one or more pin connectors on a circuit board comprising:

(a) a housing having a housing wall defining a plurality of interior cavities, each of the interior cavities sized to surround at least one pin connector;

(b) a mechanism for removably securing the housing over the circuit board;  
and

(c) a mechanism for aligning the plurality interior cavities with a plurality of pin connectors.